CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI) : (a) to (d). No inquiry has been conducted into the working of the Council during the last three years. However, a review on the various activities of the Council was conducted by the Audit from June to October, 1987, covering the period from 1978-79 to 1986-has been included in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st March, 1987 which was presented to the Parliament on 10th May, 1988. A copy of the report was received in the Ministry of Human Resource Development on 28th June, 1988 for furnishing 'action taken notes' in respect of the paras concerning the Ministry, which is receiving attention.

Damage to the Soviet Microminiature Sculpture

1036. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a precious Soviet microminiature sculpture on display in Delhi was destroyed due to the negligence of the Directorate of Festivals of India;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that a case registered with the Delhi Police in this regard has been withdrawn, if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether some officials of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations are also involved in the destruction of Soviet Microminiature sculpture; if so, what action has been taken against them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI) : (a) No, Sir. However, a Soviet Microminiature sculpture on display in the Azad Bhavan Art Gallery under the auspices of Festival of the USSR in India was found missing on 23rd April, 1988.

(b) It was reported that an old lady visitor to the exhibition inadvertently stumbled against the tripod on which the magnifying instrument, in which the microminiature in question had been fitted, was kept. The magnifying instrument fell on the ground and the microminiature came off and fell apart. The Gallery Attendant on duty picked up the magnifying instrument and replaced it on the stand. Being microscopic, the Gallery Attendant failed to notice that the microminiature was no longer there in the magnifying instrument. The loss of the microminiature was noticed when one of the Soviet experts connected with the exhibition, pointed it out later.

(c) A case was registered with the police on the same day when the loss was noticed. The police scanned the floor of the Art Gallery with the help of magnifying glasses but failed to trace the miniature. Since the police were of the opinion that it was not a case of theft but of loss due to accident, the case was withdrawn on 25th April, 1988.

(d) No officials of the ICCR were involved in the destruction/loss of the Soviet microminiature. Nevertheless, the services of the two gallery Attendants who were in charge of the Azad Bhavan Art Gallery were terminated because of their failure to report the fact of the accident immediately as soon as it took place. One of them was later reinstated when it was established that the loss was not due to negligence on his part.